

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO CINCPAC

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 18095

EXDIS (CINCPAC TREAT AS SPECAT)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, TH, XO

SUBJECT: USNAVY INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS BASED AT UTAPAO

1. HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THE US NAVY HAS RECENTLY INSTITUTED LONG-RANGE INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS FROM UTAPAO VIA DIEGO GARCIA TO BANDAR ABBAS, IRAN AND RETURN. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE NUMBER OF P-3 LONG RANGE PATROL AIRCRAFT BASING AT UTAPAO HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM 4 TO 9, ALTHOUGH THE PATROL SCHEDULE HAS PREVENTED HIGHLY VISIBLE INCREASE OF AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND HERE.

2. RTG INSISTS THAT WE INFORM THEM OF THE NATURE OF ALL US AIR ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED FROM THAI BASES. WE HAVE FINESSED THIS A BIT IN CONNECTION WITH THE LIMITED NUMBER OF INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS IN THE PAST, FOR WHICH WE HAVE NEVER SOUGHT SPECIFIC POLITICAL CLEARANCE. THE P-3 WERE ORIGINALLY CLEARED WITH THE RTG FOR PARTICIPATION IN MARKET TIME PATROLS OFF SVN.

3. THE RTG IS OF COURSE AWARE OF OUR LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR DIEGO GARCIA STAGED THROUGH UTAPAO, AND THE PATROL AIRCRAFT ALSO FILE FLIGHT PLANS WITH THE RTG FOR CLEARING THAI AIRSPACE CROSSING THE MALAY PENINSULA TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. HOWEVER, THE GREATER NUMBER AND EXTENT OF CURRENT INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS INDICATES WE SHOULD TAKE AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THIS OPERATION CONFIDENTIALLY TO APPROPRIATE RTG LEADERS.

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4. FOR THAT PURPOSE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING MORE ABOUT THESE PATROLS. ARE THEY MERELY A TEMPORARY AUGMENTATION DURING THE CURRENT HANCOCK DEPLOYMENT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, OR WILL THIS BE A CONTINUING PATROL BETWEEN THAILAND AND

IRAN? HAS ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT BEEN MADE ABOUT THIS
PATROL, OR ARE THERE CONTINGENCY STATEMENTS PREPARED TO
RESPOND TO QUERIES? WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL RATIONALE
FOR INSTITUTING THESE LONG-RANGE PATROLS, AND IS THERE ANY
NEED FOR A COVER STORY OR EXPLANATION?

5. ANY PREMATURE DISCLOSURE OF THESE OPERATIONS, THROUGH
ACCIDENT OR EXPLANATION, PRIOR TO OUR INFORMING THE RTG,
COULD BE EXTREMELY EMBARRASSING TO USE.
KINTNER

SECRET

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